

A
W O R D
O F
A D V I C E
T O
Saints and Sinners.

The Third Edition.



B R I S T O L :

Printed in the Year MDCCXLVIII.



A WORD of ADVICE to SAINTS and SINNERS.

1. **A** WORD of ADVICE to my own Heart and thine. Thou partakest of the Ordinances of GOD. Thou dost well. But if thou hast not the Blood of CHRIST at the Root of all, they will prove but painted Pageantry to go to Hell in.

Try every Day, on what Bottom thy Hope of Glory is built, and whether it was laid by the Hand of CHRIST. If not, it will never be able to endure the Storm that must come against it. Satan will throw it all down, and great will be the Fall thereof.

Glorious Professor! Thou shalt be winnowed; every Vein of thy Profession will be tried to the Purpose: 'Tis terrible to have it all come tumbling down, and to find nothing to bottom upon.

Soaring Professor! See to thy waxen Wings betimes, they will melt with the Heat of Temptations. What a Misery is it, to trade much, and break at length; and to have no Stock, no Foundation laid for Eternity!

Gifted Professor! Look there be not a Worm at the Root that will spoil all thy fine Gourd, and make it die about thee, in a Day of Scorching: Look over thy Soul daily, and ask, Where is the Blood of CHRIST to be seen upon it? Many eminent Professors have come at length to cry out, *Undone! Undone to all Eternity!*

2. Consider, the greatest Sins may be hid under the greatest Duties. See the Wound that Sin hath made in thy Soul be perfectly cured by the *Blood of CHRIST*; not skinned over with Duties, Humblings, Enlargements. Apply what thou wilt besides the *Blood of CHRIST*, it will poison the Sore. Thou wilt find that Sin was never mortified truly; nothing can kill it, but the beholding CHRIST's *Righteousness*.

Nature can afford no Balsam fit for the Cure of a Soul. Healing from *Duty*, and not from CHRIST, is the most desperate Disease. Poor ragged Nature, with all its highest Improvements, can never spin a Garment

fine enough to cover the Soul's Nakedness. Nothing is fit for that Use, but *Christ's perfect Righteousness*.

Whatsoever is of Nature's putting on, Satan will come and plunder it, and leave the Soul naked and open to the Wrath of God. All that Nature can do, will never make up the least Drachm of Grace that can mortify Sin and look Christ in the Face one Day.

3. Thou goest on Hearing, Praying, and Receiving, yet miserable mayst thou be. Look about thee, didst thou ever see Christ to this Day in Distinction from all other Excellencies and Righteousness in the World, and all them falling before the Majesty of his Love and Grace?

If thou hast seen Christ truly, thou hast seen pure Grace, pure Righteousness, far exceeding all Sin and Misery. If thou hast seen Christ, thou wouldst not do a Duty without him for ten thousand Worlds. If ever thou saw Christ, thou sawst him a *Rock*, higher than Satan or Sin; and this *Rock* doth follow thee, and there will be a continual Dropping of Honey and Grace out of it to satisfy thee. Examine, if ever thou hast beheld Christ as *the only begotten of the Father*, full of Grace and Truth. Be sure thou art come to Christ, that thou standest upon the *Rock of Ages*, hast answered to his Call to *thy Soul*, hast closed with him for Justification.

4. Men talk bravely of Believing; but Few know it. Christ is the Mystery of the Scripture; Grace the Mystery of Christ. Believing is the most wonderful thing in the World. Put any thing of thine own to it, and thou spoilest it; Christ will not so much as look at it for Believing. When thou comest to Christ, thou must leave behind thee thy *own* Righteousness, and bring nothing but thy *Sin*; (Oh that is hard!) leave behind all thy Holiness, and bring nothing but thy *Wants* and *Miseries*, else Christ is not fit for thee, nor thou for Christ. Christ will be a *pure Redeemer*, and thou must be an *undone* Sinner, or Christ and thou wilt never agree; it's the hardest thing in the World to take Christ *alone* for Righteousness: That's to acknowledge him Christ. Join any thing to him of *thy own*, and thou *un-Christs* him.

Whatever comes in when thou goest to God for

Acceptance, (besides Christ) call it *Anti-christ*; bid it be gone; make only Christ's Righteousness triumphant: All besides that is *Babylon*, which must fall, if Christ stand; and thou shalt rejoice in the Day of the Fall thereof. Christ *alone* did tread the Wine-press, and there was none with him. If thou join any thing to Christ, Christ will trample upon it in Fury and Anger, and stain his Raiment with the Blood thereof. Thou thinkest it easy to *believe*: Was ever thy Faith tried with a thorough Sight of Sin? Was it ever put to grapple with Satan, and the Wrath of God lying upon the Conscience? When thou wast in the Mouth of Hell, then did God shew thee Christ a Ransom? If then thou couldst say, *Oh, I see Grace enough in CHRIST!* thou mayst say that which is the Biggest Word in the World, *Thou Believest*; but untried Faith is uncertain Faith.

5. To Believing, there must go a clear Conviction of Sin, and the Merits of the *Blood of CHRIST*, and of CHRIST's Willingness to save upon this Consideration meerly, *That thou art a Sinner*: Things all harder than to make a World. All the Power in Nature cannot get up so high in a Storm of Sin and Guilt, as really to believe there is any Willingness in CHRIST to save. When Satan chargeth Sin upon the Conscience, then to charge it upon CHRIST, that is Gospel-like. That is to make him CHRIST, he serves for that Use. To accept his *Blood alone* for Salvation, that is the Sum of the Gospel. When the Soul, in all Duties and Distresses, can say, Nothing but CHRIST for Justification, Sanctification, Redemption; not Humblings, not Duties, not Graces; that Soul hath got above the Reach of the Billows.

All Satan's Advantages are laid in *Self-Righteousness*. God pursueth this by setting Satan upon thee; this must be torn from thee; this alone hinders CHRIST from coming in; and till CHRIST come in, Guilt will not out; and where Guilt is there is Hardness of Heart.

6. When Guilt is raised up, take Heed of getting it allay'd any way but by CHRIST's *Blood*. Make CHRIST thy Peace, not thy Duties, thy Tears: CHRIST thy Righteousness, not thy Graces. Look at CHRIST and do as much as thou wilt. Stand with all thy Weight upon CHRIST's Righteousness; take Heed of having one Foot

on thy *own* Righteousness, another on CHRIST's. Till CHRIST come and sit on high upon a Throne of Grace, there is nothing but Guilt and Terror, the Soul hanging between Hope and Fear, which is an un-gospel State.

He that fears to see the utmost Hell of his own Heart, suspects the Merits of CHRIST. Be thou never such a Sinner, try JESUS CHRIST *the Righteous*. In all Doubtings, Fears, Storms of Conscience, look at CHRIST continually. Do not argue with Satan (he desires no better) bid him go to CHRIST, and He will answer him; it's his Office to be our Advocate, his Office, to answer Justice, and he is sworn to that Office. Put Christ upon it. If thou wilt do any thing thyself, as to Satisfaction for Sin, thou renouncest Christ the Righteous.

7. Satan may alledge Scripture, but he cannot answer Scripture. It's Christ's Word of mighty Authority: Christ foiled Satan with it. In all the Scripture there is not an ill Word against a *poor* Sinner, strip of his *own* Righteousness: Nay, it plainly points out this Man for the Grace of the Gospel, and none else. Believe but Christ's Willingness, and that will make *thee* willing. If thou find thou canst not believe; remember it's Christ's Work to make thee believe. Put him upon it. He Works to will and to do. Mourn for thy Unbelief, which is setting up Guilt above Christ; an undervaluing the Merits of Christ, accounting his *Blood* an unholy, a common and unsatisfying Thing.

Thou complainest much of thyself. Doth thy Sin make thee look more at Christ; less at thyself? That is right; else complaining is but Hypocrisy. To be looking at Duties and Graces, when thou shouldst be looking at Christ, that's pitiful: Looking at them will but make thee proud; looking at Christ will make thee humble. In all thy Temptations, be not discouraged. Those Surges may be (not to break thee, but) to heave thee off thyself, on the Rock Christ.

Thou mayst be brought low, even to the Brink of Hell, ready to tumble in; thou canst not be brought lower than the Belly of Hell, yet there thou mayst look towards the holy Temple. Into the *old* Temple none might enter but purified ones, and with an Offering too. But now Christ is our Temple, to whom none must

come but *Sinners*, and that without any Offering, but his *own Blood* once offered.

8. Thou thinkest, Oh, what a Monument of Grace should I be! There are many Thousands as rich Monuments as thou. The greatest Sinner did never pass the Grace of Christ. When the Clouds are blackest, then look towards Christ, the standing Pillar of the Father's Love. His Blood speaks Reconciliation, Redemption, Liberty, Nigheness to God. Not a Drop of his Blood shall be lost. Stand and hearken what God will say, for he will speak Peace to his People, that they return no more to Folly. He speaks Grace, Mercy and Peace. That's the Language of the Father and of Christ. Wait for Christ's Appearing, as the Morning Star. He shall come as certain as the Morning, as refreshing as the Rain.

The Sun may as well be hindred from rising, as Christ the Sun of Righteousness. Look not a Moment off Christ. Look not upon Sin, but look upon Christ also. In every Duty look at Christ; before Duty, to pardon; in Duty, to assist; after Duty, to accept. Without this it's but carnal, careless Duty. Let Sin break thy Heart, but not thy Hope in the Gospel.

9. If thou hast looked at Works, Duties, Qualifications, more than at the Merits of Christ, it will cost thee dear: No wonder thou goest complaining; Graces may be Evidences, but the Merits of Christ must be the Foundation of thy Hope.

When we come to God, we must bring nothing but Christ with us. Any Ingredients of our own will poison Faith. He that builds upon Duties or Graces, knows not the Merits of Christ. This makes believing so hard, so far above Nature; If thou believest, thou must every Day renounce thy Obedience, thy Sanctification, thy Duties, thy Graces and nothing but Christ must be held up. Thou must take all out of God's Hand. Christ is the Gift of God. Faith is the Gift of God. Pardon a free Gift. Ah, how Nature storms, frets, rageth at this, that all is of *Gifts*, and *it* can purchase nothing with its Tears and Duties; that all its Workings are excluded, and of no Value in Heaven!

Consider, didst thou ever yet see the Merits of Christ, and the infinite Satisfaction made by his Death? Didst

thou see this when the Burden of Sin and the Wrath of God lay heavy on thy Conscience; that is Grace. The Greatness of Christ's Merit is not known but to a poor Soul at the greatest Loss. Slight Convictions will but have Slight Prizings of Christ's Blood and Merits.

10. *Despairing Sinner!* Thou lookest on thy Right Hand and on thy Left, saying, *Who will shew us any Good?* Look at Christ and be saved, all ye Ends of the Earth. There is none else. He is a Saviour, and there is none besides him. Look any were else, and thou art undone. God will look at nothing but Christ, and *thou* must look at nothing else. Christ is lifted up on high (as the Brazen Serpent in the WilderNESS) that Sinners at the Ends of the Earth, at the Greatest Distance, may see him. The least Sight of him will be saving, the least Touch healing to thee; and God intends thou shouldst look on him, for he hath set him upon a high Throne of Glory, in the open View of all poor Sinners. Thou hast infinite Reason to look on him. For he will bear thy Burdens; he will forgive, not only till seven Times, but seventy Times seven. It put the Faith of the Apostle to it to believe this, *Luke xvii, 4, 5.* because *we* are hard to forgive, we think Christ is hard.

11. Hear what he saith, I have found a Ransom. In him I am well pleased. God will have nothing else; nothing else will do thee good, or satisfy Conscience, but Christ, who satisfied the Father. God doth all upon the Account of Christ. Thy Deserts are Hell, Wrath, Rejection. Christ's Deserts are Life and Pardon. He will not only *shew* thee the one, but he will *give* thee the other. It's Christ's own Glory and Happiness to pardon. Consider, while Christ was upon the Earth, he was more among Publicans and Sinners than among *Scribes* and *Pharisees*; and he hath the same Love now in Heaven; he is God, and changeth not. He went through all Temptations, Sorrows, Desertions. And hath drunk the Bitterest of the Cup, and left thee the Sweet; the Condemnation is out, Christ drunk up all the Father's Wrath at one Draught; and nothing but Salvation is left for thee. Thou sayst thou canst not believe, thou canst not repent. Fitter for Christ if thou has nothing but Sin and Misery. Go

to Christ with all thy Impenitency and Unbelief, to get Faith and Repentance; that is Glorious. Tell Christ, *Lord, I have brought no Righteousness, no Grace to be justified by; I am come for thine, and must have it.* We would be bringing to Christ, and that must not be; not a Penny of Nature's highest Improvements will pass in Heaven.

12. To say in Compliment, *I am a Sinner*, is easy; but to pray with the Publican indeed, *Lord, be merciful to me a Sinner*, is the hardest Prayer in the World. It's easy to say, *I believe in Christ*; but not to see him full of Grace and Truth, *of whose Fulness thou mayst receive Grace for Grace.* It's easy to profess Christ with the Mouth; but to confess him with the Heart, that's above Flesh and Blood. Many call Christ *Saviour*; few know him so. To see Grace and Salvation in Christ is the Greatest Sight in the World; none can do that, but at the same Time they shall see that Glory and Salvation are theirs. I may be ashamed to think that to this Day I have known so little of the Blood of Christ, which is the main Thing of the Gospel. A Christless, formal Profession is the blackest Sight, next to Hell. Thou mayst have many good Things, and yet one Thing may be wanting, that may make thee go away sorrowful from Christ. Thou hast never sold all thou hast, never parted with *all* thine own Righteousness. Thou mayst be high in Duty, and yet a perfect Adversary to Christ. In every Prayer, in every Ordinance, labour after Sanctification to thy utmost; but make not a Christ of it to save thee; if so, it must come down one way or other. Christ's infinite Satisfaction, not thy Sanctification, must be thy Justification before God. When the Lord shall appear terrible out of his holy Place, Fire shall consume that as Hay and Stubble. This will be sound Religion, only to bottom all upon the everlasting Mountains of God's Love and Grace in Christ, to live continually in the Sight of Christ's infinite Merits (they are sanctifying, without them the Heart is carnal) and in those Sightings to see the full Vileness of Sin, and to see all pardoned; in those Sightings to pray and hear, seeing all thy Weak Performances accepted continually; to trample upon all thy own Righteousness, and be found continually

in the Righteousness of Christ only. Without the Blood of Christ on the Conscience, all is dead Service.

13. Search the Scriptures daily, as Mines of Gold, wherein the Heart of Christ is laid. Watch against Constitution Sins; see them in their Vileness, and they shall never break out into Act. Keep always an humble, empty, broken Frame of Heart, sensible of any spiritual Miscarriage, observant of all inward Workings, fit for the highest Communications. Keep not Guilt in the Conscience, but apply the Blood of Christ immediately. God charged Sin and Guilt upon thee to make thee look to Christ the brazen Serpent.

Judge not Christ's Love by Providences, but by Promises. Bless God for any way whereby he keeps the Soul awakened and looking after Christ; better Sickness and Temptations, than Security and Slightness.

A slighty Spirit will turn a profane Spirit, and will *sin* and *pray* too. Slightness is the Bane of Profession. If it be not rooted out of the Heart by constant and serious Dealings with, and Beholdings of Christ in Duties, it will grow more strong and more deadly, by being under Church-Ordinances. Be serious and exact in Duty, having the Weight of it upon thy Heart; but be as much afraid of grounding thy Comfort on Duties as on Sins. Comfort from any Hand but Christ is deadly. Be much in Prayer, or you will never keep up much Communion with God. As you are in Closet-Prayer, so you will be in all other Ordinances.

14. Be true to Truth, but not turbulent and scornful; restore such as are fallen, with all the Bowels of Christ. Set the broken disjointed Bones with the Grace of the Gospel! Despise not the weak; thou mayst come to wish to be in the Condition of the meanest of them. Be faithful to others Infirmities, but sensible of thy own. Visit sick Beds and deserted Souls much; they are excellent Scholars in Experience.

Abide in your Calling. Be dutiful to all Relations as to the LORD. Be content with little of the World; little will serve. Think every little much, because unworthy the least. Think every one better than thyself; loathing thyself as one fit to be trampled on by all Saints. See the Vanity of the World, and love nothing but Christ. Mourn to see so little of Christ in

the World. To a secure Soul Christ is but a Fable, the Scripture but a Story. Mourn to think how many are under Church-Order that are not under Grace. Prepare for the Cross; welcome it; bear it triumphantly like Christ's Cross, whether Scoffs, Mockings, Contempt, Imprisonments.—— But see it be Christ's Cross, not thine own.

15. Sin will hinder from Glory in the Cross of Christ. And omitting little Things against Light may breed Hell in the Conscience, as well as committing the greatest Sins. If thou hast been taken out of the Pelly of Hell into Christ's Bosom, and made to sit among Princes in the Household of God, Oh, how shouldst thou live as a Pattern of Mercy! Redeemed, restored Soul, what infinite Sums dost thou owe Christ! With what Zeal shouldst thou walk, and do every Duty! Sabbath, what praising Days should they be to thee!—— Church Fellowship! what a Heaven, a being with Christ, and Angels and Saints! What a drowning the Soul in eternal Love, as a Burial with Christ, dying to all things besides Him! Every time thou thinkest of Christ, be astonish'd; and when thou seest Sin, look at Christ's Grace, that did pardon it; and when thou art proud, look at Christ's Grace, that shall strike thee down in the Dust.

Remember Christ's Time of Love. When thou wast naked, then he chose thee. Canst thou ever have a proud Thought? Remember whose Arms supported thee from sinking, and deliver'd thee from the lowest Hell, and shout in the Ears of Angels and Men, and for ever sing Praise, Praise! Grace, Grace! Daily repent and pray; and walk in the Sight of Grace, as one that hath the Anointings of Grace upon thee. Remember thy Sins, Christ's Pardonings; thy Deserts, Christ's Merits; thy Weakness, Christ's Strength; thy Pride, Christ's Humility; thy Guilts, Christ's new Applications of his Blood; thy Wants, Christ's Fullness; thy Temptations, Christ's Tendernefs; thy Vileness, Christ's Righteousness.

16. Trifle not with Ordinances. Be much in Meditation and Prayer. Wait diligently upon all Opportunities of hearing. We have need of Doctrine, Reproof, Exhortation, Consolation, as the tender Herb and the

Grafs hath of the Rain, the Dew, the small Rain, and Showers. Do all thou doest as unto Christ, as immediately dealing with Christ Jesus, as if he were looking on thee, and thou on him, and fetch all thy Strength from him.

Observe what holy Motions you find in your Souls to Duties; prize the least good Thought thou hast of Christ. The least good Word thou speakest of him from the Heart, is rich Mercy: O bless God for it! Observe, if every Day you have the Day-spring from on high, with his Morning Dews of Mourning for Sin, constantly visiting thee. Have you the bright Morning-Star, with fresh Influences of Grace and Peace constantly arising, and Christ sweetly greeting the Soul in all Duties? What Duty makes not more spiritual, will make more carnal; what doth not quicken and humble, will deaden and harden.

17. *Judas* had the Sop; but *John* leaned on Christ's Bosom; that's the Posture in which we should pray, and hear, and perform all Duties. Nothing but lying in that Bosom will dissolve all Hardness of Heart, and make thee to mourn kindly for Sin. That will humble indeed, and make the Soul cordial to Christ, and Sin vile to the Soul. Never think thou art as thou shouldst be, until thou come to this, always to see and feel thyself lying in the Bosom of Christ, who is in the Bosom of his Father. Come and move the Father for a Sight of Christ, and you shall be sure to speed; you can come with no Request that pleaseth him better; he gave him out of his own Bosom for that very End, to be held up before the Eyes of all Sinners, as the everlasting Monument of his Father's Love.

Looking at the natural Sun weakeneth the Eye. The more you look at Christ, the Son of Righteousness, the stronger and clearer will the Eye of Faith be. Look but at Christ, you will love him, and live on him. Think on him continually; keep the Eye constantly upon Christ's Blood, or every Blast of Temptation will shake you. If you will see Sin's Sinsfulness, to loath it and mourn, do not stand looking on Sin only, but look upon Christ as suffering and satisfying. If you would see your Graces, your Sanctification, do not stand gazing upon them, but look at Christ's Righteousness first; look at your Graces in the second Place.

18. Have nothing to do with thy Graces and Sanctification till thou hast seen Christ first. He that looks upon Christ thro' his Graces, is like one that sees the Sun in Water, which wavereth and moveth as the Water doth. Look upon Christ as shining in the Firmament of the Father's Love, and you will see him in his own Glory. Pride and Unbelief will put you upon seeing somewhat in yourself first; but Faith will have to do with none but Christ, who must swallow up thy Sanctification as well as thy Sin. He that sets up his Sanctification to look at first, he sets up the greatest Idol, which will strengthen his Doubts and Fears. Do but look off Christ, and presently (like *Peter*) you sink in Doubts.

If you would pray, and cannot, and so are discouraged, see Christ praying for you: If you are troubled, see Christ your Peace leaving you Peace when he went up into Heaven, again and again, charging you not to be troubled, so as to obstruct thy Comfort or thy Believing. He is now upon the Throne, having spoiled upon his Cross all whatsoever can hurt or annoy thee; he hath borne all thy Sins, Sorrows, Troubles, Temptations, and is gone to prepare Mansions for thee.

19. Thou who hast seen Christ all, and thyself absolutely nothing, who makest Christ all thy Life, and art dead to all Righteousness besides, do Christ this one Favour for all his Love to thee, love all his poor Saints, (the meanest, the weakest, notwithstanding any Difference in Judgement) they are engraven on his Heart, let them be soon thine. *Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem, they shall prosper that love thee. Psal. cxxii. 6.*

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